

Andrew Jackson to Roger Brooke Taney, October 13, 1836, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO CHIEF JUSTICE TANEY.

Washington, October 13, 1836.

My Dear sir, As the close of my administration approaches I have turned my thoughts to the subject of a farewell address, as a means of rendering a last service to my country. It strikes me, that in quitting public life, the motives of whatever I may suggest as the experience of a long life spent in the discharge of public duties will be more impartially considered than any communication made at a time when my anxiety for the success of my measures might be suspected of warping my opinions, and when the interests of an opposing party produced an inclination in all under its influence, to judge most uncharitably of my intentions. I have supposed therefore, that a plain and honest expression of the principles which have given direction to my public course, a review of the measures springing from them, with such comments as may be calculated to impress upon the mind of my countrymen the true scope of all my efforts, however I may have failed in the accomplishment of them, would have a salutary influence.

I would like to have your opinion as to the most appropriate time for such an address and the mode of presenting it to the nation, if one is delivered at all. Ought it to be made to congress at the beginning of the session, concluding my annual message with it? or would it be more appropriate at the close of the session when the committee of the Houses call upon me to know if I have any further communications to make to them? my mind inclines to the latter mode for the reasons suggested above. I would be glad however, that

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you would consider the subject in all its bearings and advise me what course you would recommend.

I would also be gratified, if consistent with your convenience, that you would throw on paper your thoughts as to the topics which you would consider most appropriate for the address, and your views generally of the range it should take. The events of my administration necessarily bring into review, that subject of all absorbing interest, our *glorious Union*—the multiplied schemes which ambitious and factious spirits have devised to dissolve it and throw our country into anarchy, is a point which as it has commanded much of my ease, and created the deepest solicitude during my time of service, ought to be treated as preeminently important. How to impress the public with an adequate aversion to the sectional jealousies, the sectional parties, and sectional preferences which centring on mischievous and intriguing individuals gave them power to disturb and shake our happy confederacy, is a matter which has occupied my own thoughts greatly, and I would be glad you would commit to paper the light in which this subject strikes you most forcibly.

The dangerous power of the United States Bank, and the dangerous tendency of privileged monopolies generally, and especially those privileged to adulterate the currency is another topic on which I would like to have the light of your understanding thrown.

It seems to me that one of the greatest threatners of our admirable form of Government, is the gradual consuming corruption, which is spreading and carrying stockjobbing, Land jobbing and every species of speculation into our Legislature, state and national. the greatest generator of the new vices which are I fear, undermining the purity and complicating the simplicity of our virtuous Government as left us by our fathers, is the *paper system*, which has introduced a thousand ways of robbing honest labour of its earnings to make knaves rich, powerful and dangerous—whatever demoralises the people, must tend to destroy Institutions founded solely upon their virtue. If this topic should be deemed proper for the paper I have in contemplation it would give me pleasure

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to have your views as to its treatment. I am so harrassed with business and company, and deprived as I am of the aid of major Donelson that I am compelled to ask the aid of friends in maturing the address I have in contemplation.

I have to ask you to present me kindly to your amiable family and remain etc. etc.